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REPORT

TO THE

CITY COUNCIL OF PROVIDENCE,

PRESENTED JUNE 1, 1846,

Providence, Committee

BY THEIR COMMITTEE, APPOINTED SEPTEMBER 3d, 1838, TO SUPERINTEND THE ERECTION OF

SCHOOL HOUSES,

ON THE RE-ORGANIZATION OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION 794

PROVIDENCE:
PRINTED BY KNOWLES AND VOSE.
1846.

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REPORT.

To the City Council of the City of Providence.

The undersigned, members of a Joint Committee, appointed by the City Council, in the year 1838, to contract for, and superintend the building of the public school houses then ordered to be erected, respectfully submit the following Report:—

Presuming that a portion of the present members of the City Council are not familiar with the proceedings which led to the appointment of this Committee, the undersigned have deemed it proper briefly to refer to these proceedings, before entering into a detail of the manner in which they have discharged their duties, which continued through several successive years.

On the ninth day of April, 1838, an Ordinance was passed by the City Council, providing for a re-organization of the Public Schools of the City; and on the fourth day of June following, Messrs. Thomas R. Holden and Joseph Cady, of the Board of Aldermen, and Messrs. Edward P. Knowles, Henry Anthony, Amherst Everett, John L. Hughes, David Andrews, and Erastus F. Knowlton, of the Common Council, were appointed by the City Council a Joint Committee to make investigations relative to the alterations and improvements which were required on the school houses and estates then occupied; and to ascertain what other lots and buildings would be necessary to carry out the provisions of the Ordinance.

That Committee were instructed to report by bill, to embrace, as nearly as might be, an estimate of the amount of the expenditure required for the department of Primary and Grammar Schools, and of the High School. They were also empowered to cause a set of school house drawings to be made to accompany their Report.

Thus instructed, your Committee entered upon the discharge of their duties. In the course of a month they completed their survey, and made a Report, fully describing the condition of the several school houses and estates, and recommending the erection of new School Houses in all the school districts in the City. They did not, at that time, make any report upon the other branch of the subject referred to them; but requested permission to raise a sub-committee from their number, to visit the Public Schools in Boston, Salem, Lowell and New Bedford, to examine the construction of School Houses, and the style and arrangements of seats and desks, in order that they might be enabled to recommend a set of plans for School Houses, embracing the most important improvements which had been made in school house architecture.

That request was granted, and their sub-committee visited Boston, Salem and Lowell, and examined the construction of the public school houses in those cities, and made a full report, which was presented to the City Council in connection with the Report of the whole Committee, recommending the style and size of the buildings for the Grammar Schools, and also for the Primary Schools. Both these Reports were accepted, and were ordered to be printed for the information of the citizens.

Accompanying these Reports, the Committee submitted a draft of certain Resolutions which, after much discussion and some modifications were adopted and passed by the City Council on the third day of September, 1838, as follows:

Resolved, That Messrs. Edward P. Knowles, Henry Anthony, Amherst Everett, John L. Hughes, David Andrews, and Erastus F. Knowlton, from the Common Council, and Messrs. Thomas R. Holden, and Joseph Cady, from the Board

of Aldermen, be and they are hereby appointed a Committee to cause such of the present School Houses to be removed or taken down, and such new School Houses to be erected and furnished, as may be necessary to carry into full operation the Ordinance entitled "An Ordinance in relation to the Public Schools," passed on the 9th of April, 1838, and in conformity to the Report of a Joint Committee, this day made and received, whenever the locations of such new School Houses shall be designated by the School Committee; and also to make and enter into, in the name of the City, all necessary contracts for materials and labor for said buildings.

Resolved, That said Committee be and they are hereby authorized and empowered to cause any of such new School Houses to be erected on any lands now belonging to the City, which the School Committee may designate; and also to purchase, for the use of the City, any other lands for said purpose which, they, together with the School Committee, may deem advisable; and also to sell, in the name of the City, any of the present School Houses and estates which they may deem advisable to sell, and which can be legally sold; and in case of any such sale or sales, the City Treasurer for the time being, is hereby authorized and directed, under the direction of said Committee, to execute good and sufficient deeds conveying all the right, title and interest of the City in any land or lands so sold.

Resolved, That said Committee be and they are hereby authorized and empowered to raise by loan or loans, for the use of the City, a sum or sums of money sufficient for carrying these Resolutions into full effect, not exceeding forty thousand dollars in the whole, at such rates of interest as they may deem advisable, not exceeding five per cent. per annum, the principal to be paid at such times as they may deem advisable, not however at shorter periods than one third in ten years, one third in twenty years, and one third in thirty years; the interest to be paid annually.

We insert these Resolutions, in order to show how extensive were the powers and duties of the Commitee; and also to show that they have not, in any one case, either transcended their powers, or neglected to discharge their duties as faithfully as the circumstances would permit.

Soon after the appointment of the Committee, they met for organization; and Thomas R. Holden was chosen Chairman,

and Amherst Everett, Secretary. The whole Committee was divided into sub-committees, and a particular portion of the work requiring immediate attention, was assigned to each sub-committee.

Subsequently thereto, David Andrews and Amherst Everett resigned their appointment as members of the Committee; and Seth Padelford was appointed in place of David Andrews, and was also appointed Secretary, in place of Amherst Everett. A full record of the proceedings of the General Committee has been kept, and is herewith submitted for examination.

From this record, some idea of the time and labor devoted by the Committee, may be gathered. They held twenty-nine meetings for business, besides almost an equal number of informal meetings for consultation, of which no record was made.

At an early meeting, the Chairman, Thomas R. Holden, was appointed Auditor of all accounts made by the Committee; and the Secretary was not authorized to draw any orders on the City Treasurer for the payment of any bill which had not been examined and signed by the Auditor. An accurate account of all moneys expended by the Committee has been kept, and is herewith submitted for examination.

The Committee, having visited Boston, Salem, Lowell, and Charlestown, accompanied by an architect, for the purpose of examining the public school houses in these places, obtained drawings of the latest improvements which had been made in the construction of school houses. They also caused a full set of drawings to be made, exhibiting the exterior and interior of a house for a Primary School, and also of a house for a Grammar School. To these drawings were appended full and minute specifications of the size, the materials, and the style of the work required.

The Committee then advertised for proposals for building the new School Houses according to the plans and specifications exhibited; and after an examination of the different proposals submitted to them, it appeared that Messrs. Tallman & Bucklin had offered the lowest terms. Consequently contracts

were made with them for the erection of three Primary School Houses, at twelve hundred and fifty dollars each; and of five Grammar School Houses at seven thousand five hundred dollars each; all to be completed and furnished ready for the reception of the schools.

Messrs. Andrews & Palmer erected the School House in the Third Ward for Messrs. Tallman & Bucklin, at the same price which the latter received; viz. $7,500.

These School Houses were all to be built in the best manner; and no work was to be paid for until it had been examined and approved by persons agreed upon by the contracting parties. They were all completed in the early part of the year 1840, and were examined and approved.

In the course of the next year, (1841,) the Grammar School House in the Second Ward was built by Messrs. J. H. & E. Martin & Co.; and the East street and the Transit street Primary School Houses by Messrs. Bushee & Carpenter.

In the following year, (1842,) the Committee having caused to be made a full set of drawings and specifications for the High School building, advertised for proposals for erecting the same. They received six proposals; the highest being $18,-100, and the lowest $14,975. Messrs. Andrews & Palmer having presented the lowest terms, according to the specifications, a contract was made with them, and that building was completed the next year.

The Primary School House, on Federal street, was built the same year by Messrs. Tallman & Bucklin.

It is important to state here, that the Committee found it necessary, in the progress of building several of the School Houses, to make slight alterations in the contracts, in order to render the Houses better suited to the wants and conveniences of the schools. The plan for the arrangement of the seats and desks in all the Grammar Schools was changed; which besides rendering the rooms more convenient, will accommodate about thirty pupils more in each school.

This arrangement was attended with some additional ex-

pense. It was found necessary to make several alterations in the original plans of the High School. One was to carry up the walls one foot higher than specified; another, to place granite blocks in front of the building instead of grass banks; because the space left between the walls of the building and the street was too narrow to admit of a grass bank. Several other alterations were made with the approbation of the Committee; all of which enhanced the value of the buildings, and of course somewhat increased their expense.

The Committee felt that they ought not to leave these estates as finished, without setting trees around them; and accordingly they caused about one hundred and fifty trees to be set in and around the School House lots, most of which are now growing well.

Having completed their Report relating to the erection of the buildings, the Committee have prepared, and here insert, an account, showing the amount of all monies expended by them, and the cost of each School House estate.

ACCOUNT OF THE COST OF SCHOOL HOUSES, &c.

HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING.

For lots on Benefit, Angell and Waterman streets, of Mrs. Sarah Thompson,	5,500 00	
Andrews & Palmer's bills for building, &c.	15,984 79	
Samuel Lewis's bill for curb stone,	66 42	
H. Mumford's bill grading, labor, &c.	21 66	21,572 87

GRAMMAR SCHOOL HOUSE IN FIRST WARD.

For lots adjoining old School House lots to Thomas L. Halsey, Esq.	1,737 23	
Tallman & Bucklin, bill for building house, &c.	7,980 31	
Daniel A. Sweet, bill of curb stone,	67 75	
" " " stone steps,	38 50	
John Barney, bill for work done,	45 20	
F. P. Durfee, bill for stone,	27 00	
S. R. Weeden, bill of stone for well,	6 50	
Ingalls & Cushing, bill of furnace, fixtures, &c.	198 83	
Pardon Clark, bill for painting fences, &c.	138 55	
Thomas Sekell, bill re-building furnace, &c.	111 76	
Nathan Simmons, bill of labor and materials for fences,	88 91	
Increase Sumner, bill carting gravel, &c.	43 08	10,483 62

GRAMMAR SCHOOL HOUSE IN SECOND WARD.

For lots on the corner of Angell and Prospect street, to Richard Carrique,	900 00	
Richard & Rufus Waterman,	1,900 00	
J. H. & E. Martin, and Sekell & Mumford, bills for building house, &c.	8,130 02	
Ingalls & Cushing, for furnace, fixtures, &c.	100 84	
S. B. Cushing, bill for surveying, &c.	12 50	
Thomas Sekell, bill for grading lot,	77 89	11,121 25

GRAMMAR SCHOOL HOUSE IN THIRD WARD.

For lot on Arnold and Brook street, of John Whipple, Esq.	840 00
Andrews & Palmer, bill for building house, &c.	8,152 50

George H. Peck, bill for filling in earth, &c.	198 60	
Daniel A. Sweet, bill for curb stone,	50 54	
J. Morgan, bill of stone for bank wall,	10 25	
A. Ellis, for taking down bell and putting up do.	2 96	
John A. Townsend, bill for painting fences, &c.	123 11	
Ingalls & Cushing, bill of furnace, fixtures, &c.	138 38	
H. W. Bradford, bill of lime for pointing well,	2 00	
John Barney, bill for laying stone wall,	27 51	
D. Gallagher, bill for stoning well,	13 33	
Thomas Sekell, bill for re-building furnace, &c.	111 76	—9,670 94

[This House was left unpainted, and of course about $150 should be added to its cost, in order that it may be fairly compared with the others.]

GRAMMAR SCHOOL HOUSE IN FOURTH WARD.

For lot on Fountain street, to Pardon Taber,	1,000 00	
For do. do. E. Tourtellott,	547 40	
For do. do. Thomas Brown,	500 00	
Tallman & Bucklin, bill for building house, &c.	7,945 70	
Increase Sumner, bill for filling in gravel, &c.	119 98	
Daniel A. Sweet, bill of curb stone,	92 75	
Massa Bassett, bill of labor paid, &c.	11 72	
Shaw & Gray, bill for painting fences,	104 00	
Ingalls & Cushing, bill for furnace, fixtures, &c.	163 47	
Thomas Sekell, bill for re-building furnace,	111 76	—10,596 78

GRAMMAR SCHOOL HOUSE in FIFTH WARD.

For lot on Elm street to, Pardon Clark,	1,287 00	
For do. do. H. Bassett,	418 00	
Tallman & Bucklin, bill of building house, &c.	8,085 92	
C. B. Manchester, bill for filling in gravel, &c.	123 00	
S. H. Andrews, bill for digging well, &c.	60 00	
Daniel A. Sweet, bill for curb stone,	9 85	
Pardon Clark, bill for painting fences	142 64	
Ingalls & Cushing, bill for furnace and fixtures,	205 14	
Increase Sumner, bill for carting gravel,	3 75	
Thomas Sekell, bill for re-building furnace, &c.	111 76	—10,447 06

GRAMMAR SCHOOL HOUSE IN SIXTH WARD.

For lots on Summer and Pond street of Joseph K. and Amey Angell,	650 00	
Tallman & Bucklin, bill for building house, &c.	8,121 49	
Andrews & Gilmore, bill for gravelling cellar,	11 77	
E. A. Durfee, bill of stone, and laying the same in bank wall and fountain; also, a cap stone,	262 08	
John Everton, bill for filling in lot with gravel,	909 00	
Massa Bassett, bill for labor paid, &c.	11 72	
Daniel A. Sweet, bill of curb stone,	103 92	
Ingalls & Cushing, bill for furnace and fixtures,	167 90	
Thomas Sekell, bill re-building furnace,	111 77	
Chace & Penno's bill, for painting fences,	95 23	
——— ——— bill,	14 86	—10,459 74

PRIMARY SCHOOL HOUSE IN FIRST WARD.

Lot leased of the Commissioners of the Dexter Donation Fund,		
Tallman & Bucklin, bill for building house, &c.	1,277 70	
N. G. Helme in relinquishment of his lease of said lot,	25 00	
Pardon Clark, bill for painting fences.	179 80	
Increase Sumner, bill for carting gravel, &c.	29 83	1,512 33

PRIMARY SCHOOL HOUSE IN THIRD WARD, ON TRANSIT STREET.

Bushee & Carpenter, bill for building School House on old School House lot,	1,584 40	
Increase Sumner, bill for carting gravel, &c.	12 50	1,596 90

PRIMARY SCHOOL HOUSE IN THIRD WARD, ON EAST STREET.

For lot of Williams Thayer	425 00	
Bushee & Carpenter, bill for building house, &c.	1,200 00	
do. do. do. fence	229 16	
John A. Howland, bill for cylinder stove, &c.	33 81	
J. A. Townsend, bill for painting fence, &c.	54 00	1,941 97

PRIMARY SCHOOL HOUSE IN SIXTH WARD.

For lot of S. Rawson, on Federal street,	1,000 00	
Tallman & Bucklin, bill for building house complete,	1,850 00	2,850 00

PRIMARY SCHOOL HOUSE IN SIXTH WARD, ON KNIGHT STREET.

For lot of Tristam Burges, on Knight street,	250 00	
Tallman & Bucklin, bill for building house, &c.	1,277 19	
John Everston, bill for filling in gravel, &c.	32 00	
Chace & Penno, bill for painting fences, &c.	45 35	1,604 54

PRIMARY SCHOOL HOUSE IN SIXTH WARD, IN OLNEYVILLE.

For lot of Asa Bosworth,	225 00	
Tallman & Bucklin, bill for building house.	1,297 72	
Jarvis Hopkins, bill for filling in gravel,	90 00	
Chace & Penno, bill for painting fences,	75 16	1,687 88

SUNDRY CHARGES, NOT DIVIDED AMONG THE ESTATES, VIZ:

Examining titles, surveys, &c.	88 13	
Lightning Rods for Primary School houses,	258 57	
Furniture,	53 00	
Protecting old School Houses,	11 86	
Trees, and setting the same,	228 79	
Fences, not included in contracts,	2,350 88	
Superintendence, and other work not included in contracts,	1,874 31	4,865 54
		$100,411 42
Received for old School Houses,		350 50
Drawn from the City Treasury,		$100,060 92

This Committee cannot willingly close their Report, without referring to a few points of more general interest. Public opinion on the subject of Schools and School Houses has greatly changed since their labors were commenced. At that time, many good men honestly disapproved of the plan of fur-

nishing so good, and consequently, so expensive, a system of public instruction.

By a very natural transition, a part of this opposition to, and dislike of, the public school system, was transferred to the Committee who were charged with carrying its provisions, for buildings, into effect; and the Committee were much blamed for causing so large, so durable, and of course, so expensive, buildings to be erected for the accommodation of the schools.

They acted according to the best of their judgment at the time, and believe that the course they pursued on this subject has been fully approved by a very large majority of the citizens. They are of opinion that if the question were to come before the public again, still larger, more durable and more ornamental buildings would be ordered, rather than a cheaper and less permanent class of houses.

Although the sum above shown to have been expended for School Houses, is really very large, yet it is confidently believed to have been a very good investment for the City, considered in a pecuniary point of view alone. The school system has very justly been regarded "as an alleviation of one of the heaviest burdens put upon the middling and poorer classes in the community." And although the increase of taxation, which was immediately required by so great a change in our system, may have been a cause of some complaint to the owners of real estate, yet we have no doubt that a careful examination of the whole subject will lead to the conviction, that all the money which has thus been paid by that class of our citizens, has been returned with increase.

In the course of this Report, reference has been made to the changes which were caused by the resignation of some members of the Committee and the election of others.

The Committee cannot take their final leave of this subject without referring, in the most respectful manner, to one of their associates suddenly removed from them in the midst of his labors and usefulness.

In the death of Erastus F. Knowlton, Esq., the Commit-

tee was deprived of one of its most valuable members, the cause of education of an ardent friend, and the community of an excellent citizen.

John L. Hughes, Esq., who was an active and efficient member of the Committee, and whose unwearied exertions for the improvement of the Public Schools will long be remembered, has removed from this City, and now resides in the City of Philadelphia.

Respectfully submitted, by

THOMAS R. HOLDEN, *Chairman.*
EDWARD P. KNOWLES,
JOSEPH CADY,
HENRY ANTHONY,
SETH PADELFORD, *Secretary.*

City of Providence.

In City Council, May 11, 1846.

Resolved, That the arduous and gratuitous labors of Thomas R. Holden and Joseph Cady, late Aldermen; and of Edward P. Knowles, Henry Anthony, Amherst Everett, John L. Hughes, David Andrews, and Seth Padelford, late of the Common Council, and of Erastus F. Knowlton, deceased, late of the Common Council, who constituted the Committee of the City Council, under whose supervision and direction, the commodious, permanent and tasteful buildings for Public Schools in the City of Providence, from the years 1838 to 1844, were erected, deserve a grateful public acknowledgement; to render which, the City Council hereby direct this expression thereof to be recorded upon their Journal, and to be printed together with the Report of said Joint Committee.

Resolved, That the Report of said Joint Committee to superintend the building of Public School Houses, &c., made to this City Council, March 9, 1846, be referred to said Commit-

tee, together with the Mayor and Clerk of the Common Council; after the same has been revised by said Committee, to cause two thousand copies thereof to be printed in form and style like the City Ordinances, and to be distributed for public use.

A true copy: Attest,

ALBERT PABODIE, *City Clerk.*

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